

12 Challenges for 2012

Challenge

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April is Fair Housing Month. For this challenge, we encourage you to:

Know Your Rights!

To help you achieve this goal, we've included articles and resources with this challenge. For more information, feel free to [contact the FSS Team](#) by replying to this email.

What is Fair Housing? (FAQs)

Q: What is fair housing?

A: Fair housing means your family has the chance to choose where you want to live based on the family's ability to pay the rent or mortgage.

Q: What is the Fair Housing Act?

A: The Fair Housing Act is a law that says that, as you seek housing, no one may discriminate against your family because of your family's race, color, national origin, sex, religion, familial status, or disability.

Q: What kind of housing is covered by the Fair Housing Act?

A: The Fair Housing Act covers most housing: apartments, houses, condos, townhouses, mobile homes etc.

Q: Are there clues that show you that your family may have been discriminated against when looking for a place to live?

A: Yes, a clue may be found in statements made to a family when they want to rent or buy a home. These are examples of what we call familial status discrimination.

Examples:

- "Children cannot use the pool or club house."
- "There is an additional security deposit of \$100 per child."
- "This is a quiet development, we don't want children living here."

Q: How is a person with a disability protected under the Fair Housing Act?

A: A person with a disability is treated and protected in the same way as a person without a disability. Some people with disabilities may have special needs so that they may live and enjoy the housing of their choice.

Examples:

- A wider door so that a wheel chair can go through
- A ramp so that they can get into the house without using steps
- Guide dogs



Fair Housing in Real Life: HUD Charges Property Owners with Discrimination Against Families with Children



The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced in October that it is charging a property owner, manager and management company of Creek Point Apartments, a low- income tax-credit affordable housing complex, for violating the Fair Housing Act because of its policies regarding families with children.

The charge says that the building managers sent a letter to tenants prohibiting children under age 16, and later age 18, from being outside without an adult. Part of the letter said: “ THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT CHILDREN CAN BE WATCHED FROM WINDOWS AND BREEZEWAYS . . . IF YOUR CHILD IS CAUGHT OUTSIDE WITHOUT A PARENT RIGHT BESIDE THEM YOU WILL BE GIVEN A FINE OF \$50.00 AND RENT WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED IF THIS IS NOT PAID IN FULL ASAP! ” The rule was strictly enforced. The charge reads that the father of one of the families watched from the breezeway in front of his apartment as a staff member sent his son indoors because he was playing outside without his parent standing next to him. Management fined the family and issued notices of lease violations and fines to at least nine other residents. Management then charged the families more fines when they moved out.

If a judge finds that illegal discrimination has occurred, the judge may order the company to pay the families for the fines and moving costs. The judge may also order the company to pay fines and attorney’s fees to keep them from discriminating in the future.

Excerpts from [HUD](#)

Need to File a Complaint?

If you think your rights have been violated, contact the nearest San Diego agency for help and guidance. A list of agencies and the areas they serve have been attached to this email and is also [available on our website](#).

You have one year after an alleged violation to file a complaint, but you should file it as soon as possible. Remember! unless you report housing discrimination, it won’t stop!



For information on all of the County of San Diego Department of Housing and Community Development’s programs and activities, like us on [Facebook!](#)

